

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the MacBride nomination until 6 p.m. and that at 6 p.m. the Senate vote on confirmation of the Baker and Lewis nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Neil Harvey MacBride, of Virginia, to be General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. For the information of the Senate, we expect to line up to three additional votes this evening. Therefore, Senators should expect a series of up to five rollcall votes beginning at 6 p.m. Senators are asked to vote from their desks after the first vote so we can move these along and not spend all night here.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am actually on the floor to speak to a different issue, even though I think expediting votes is an important one, and I support that.

But I am really here to highlight the negative consequences for our country of continuing to fund our government through continuing resolutions.

One of the most basic constitutional duties of Congress is the appropriations process. The Nation relies on this body to provide Federal funds for programs that support national defense, small businesses, our border defenses, conservation of public lands, food assistance for low-income families, and so much, much more.

And as a long-serving Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am extremely disappointed that Congress is about to pass yet another CR that is going to take us to March 11, nearly 5 months past the start of the fiscal year.

Now, on a positive note, I understand that there is a tentative agreement on top-line funding, so that we should have budget numbers for an omnibus that would fund the remainder of the fiscal year. And that is good news. But the fundamental problem remains; long-term CRs create uncertainty and inefficiencies inside and outside of the Federal Government.

CRs prevent Agencies from issuing new grants or expanding programs. They curtail hiring and recruitment. And moreover, those who rely on government programs and Federal resources—and that could be either SNAP recipients or defense contractors, but everyone is forced into a budgetary limbo.

And simply put, when Congress refuses to act, people can't do their jobs,

and this is especially true for our military men and women who are serving.

From Russia's efforts to undermine democracies in Europe to China's rapidly expanding sphere of influence, to the unpredictable threat of rogue actors like North Korea and Iran, the threats we face today are varied and numerous. And nothing hinders our national security more than funding our national priorities in piecemeal fashion.

Make no mistake, as we are engaged in this crisis right now in Europe, where Russia is on the borders of Ukraine, threatening to invade, we can bet that Vladimir Putin is watching our Congress to see if we can actually get an agreement to get a budget funded for the rest of this year.

Recently, several of my colleagues from the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense and the Armed Services Committee met with Marine Corps Commandant General Berger to discuss the challenges that are facing the Marines. The message from General Berger was clear: If we continue to fund our government through CRs, it will erode our military readiness, and it will cut training time and impede the maintenance processes we rely on to keep our soldiers safe.

The impact of continued CRs on our military would be wide-ranging, and the negative effects would continue to ripple for years. And we had this experience since I have been here. In 2012 and 2013, when we had the budget cliff, we saw what happened to our military. We saw readiness of our men and women in uniform erode.

Thousands of pilot flight hours would be lost. Critical exercises within our national allies would be canceled. Our overall global presence diminished at a time in which our adversaries are seeking to outcompete us in multiple theaters.

Aircraft like the brandnew KC-46 tankers that we are so proud to have stationed at Pease Air National Guard Base in New Hampshire, they are such a point of pride. They are an invaluable strategic national asset, but they would spend more time on the ground rather than flying the missions that they were designed for.

And submarines, the backbone of our nuclear deterrence and technological overmatch against our adversaries and, by the way, the ships that China is most concerned about, are an instantly recognizable symbol of American military might and the values of our country, they would be sidelined due to maintenance disruptions.

That would have significant impact not just for our readiness but also for places like the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, which has as its responsibility the maintenance and repair of our attack submarines.

So what kind of a signal does it send to adversaries like Russia, as they continue amassing troops on the Ukrainian border and threaten the stability of Europe, when we can't get a budget?

Long-term efforts to recruit and retain the best and brightest to serve in our military would be undone as bonus and incentive pays are cut and overall end-strength numbers decrease by thousands.

Military families would be forced to bear the burden of greater financial uncertainty on top of the many sacrifices that they already make for our country. We would be left with a smaller, less capable force that is demoralized from pay cuts and forced to shoulder greater risks for their safety.

Now, in addition to the harm to our servicemembers and military families, we would also be undermining the critical modernization efforts that we need to keep pace at a time when competitors like China are experiencing technological breakthroughs.

Just 8 months ago, I am sure we all remember that China tested an advanced hypersonic missile that was launched into space before reentering the atmosphere and nearly hitting its target.

This test should serve as a wake-up call about the urgent threat that China's military breakthroughs pose. And if the U.S. research and development efforts are slowed down due to the constraints of operating under a continuing resolution, we will not be able to drive the innovation needed to keep pace with China, let alone regain a convincing advantage.

And make no mistake, Putin isn't the only one watching to see if we can get a budget agreement in this Congress. Xi is also watching from China.

The development of our next-generation fighter to ensure we maintain air superiority in the air will be slowed.

Our efforts to defend against cyber attacks that could cripple critical infrastructure or expose national security secrets would be hamstrung.

Simply put, for all the might and selfless service of our service men and women, we would be asking them to defend us while tying their hands behind their backs simply because we in Congress can't find the courage of compromise.

I would say to my colleague Senator CORNYN from Texas, who talked about the narrow focus of Democrats—who are in the majority in this body right now, very slim majority—worrying only about our own parochial interests, that this is an opportunity for us to work together. Let's work across the aisle and see if we can't find some agreement on budget that will get this done not just for the remaining months of this fiscal year but next year and the next year and the next year.

China doesn't just compete with us on military technology; China and our other economic competitors are pouring resources into scientific and technological innovation. And if we want to sustain our global prosperity, global leadership, and national security, we cannot afford to be caught flatfooted.

That is why last week the House of Representatives passed the America

COMPETES Act, which is a companion to the Senate-passed U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, which passed the Senate months ago with a very strong bipartisan vote.

These bills will soon be in conference, and, if passed, they will bolster innovation and international trade, but the investments to meet the authorizations that are contained in these bills can't be made under a continuing resolution.

I chair the Commerce, Justice, and Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, the CJS Subcommittee. Our bipartisan CJS bill included a \$1 billion increase for the National Science Foundation to keep pace with scientific discoveries that can power the economy in fields like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, microelectronics, and advanced communications.

Under a CR, we would forfeit the chance to fund 2,300 additional research and education grants that will support 27,500 more scientists, technicians, teachers, and students compared to fiscal year 2021.

That means a lot of innovative research projects, and therefore potentially new discoveries, technology, and industries would never get started. It also would diminish our ability to train the next generation of innovators.

It isn't just the National Science Foundation; under a CR, NASA wouldn't have the needed increases that will help us return humans to the Moon—the high ground that China is also eyeing. We will lose out on the opportunity to provide the Department of Commerce additional funding to build next-generation climate and weather satellites, help small- and medium-sized manufacturers, enforce export and trade laws, and invest in economic development.

Furthermore, a CR would delay implementation of the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

Last year, along with nine of our colleagues, we drafted the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which is bipartisan legislation to make historic investments in our Nation's infrastructure. The legislation provides \$550 billion in new Federal investment to respond to the needs of the country, from rebuilding crumbling roads and bridges to providing clean drinking water and addressing harmful contaminants, to expanding broadband coverage to even the most rural parts of our country. The Senate passed that infrastructure bill by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 69 to 30.

When President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law, it became the single biggest infrastructure investment in U.S. history. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us to invest in this country. But if we continue with CRs, the implementation of this bipartisan infrastructure law could be delayed.

In addition, as a result of its flat obligation limitations, a CR would pre-

vent State departments of transportation from accessing higher amounts of formula funding provided by the highway trust fund.

The CR would also prohibit new starts for new formula programs authorized by the bipartisan infrastructure law, including the fiscal year 2022 portion of the carbon reduction program that supports emission-reducing transportation projects and the PROTECT formula funding to States to support transportation infrastructure resiliency.

Now, in addition to slowing meaningful infrastructure investments, a CR also fails to address urgent needs in our communities.

Americans want to be safe from international threats to our national and economic security, but more important, they want to be safe in their communities. Yet, in 2020, murders rose by 30 percent.

The Senate Commerce-Justice-Science bill includes significant funding to help local police departments fight crime and put officers on the street. It also includes a new Community Violence Intervention Initiative to implement strategies to reduce homicides and gun violence. But with a CR, we wouldn't have funding for this promising strategy.

We would also lose the chance to provide historic levels of funding for the Office on Violence Against Women. Today, it is particularly important because a bipartisan group of Senators will introduce a reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. But without a CJS appropriations bill, we can't provide additional funding for the Sexual Assault Services Program, which is a formula grant released to States, Tribes, and other coalitions in order to provide support services like medical services, counseling, and crisis intervention for victims of sexual assault, and we cannot start new programs like Restorative Justice, a growing area in criminal justice to repair and address the harm experienced by victims.

Continuing to rely on last year's funding levels and last year's programs undermines our chances to improve our military readiness, to invest in our economy, and to address emerging challenges.

This week, instead of enacting funding bills for the fiscal year that began on October 1, 2021, Congress will instead extend the deadline again, passing another CR through March 11. Now, don't get me wrong, I am glad we are continuing to keep the government open, and I understand that Senate leadership—Chairman LEAHY and Vice Chairman SHELBY, along with their House counterparts—has reached a tentative agreement on total spending levels to allow us to use the next month to finish our work and enact a remaining year appropriations bill, but it is way past time to have made that happen. The American people deserve no less, and we need to do better next year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Florida.

HONORING THE MEMORIES OF THE VICTIMS OF THE SENSELESS ATTACK AT MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL ON FEBRUARY 14, 2018

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, it is hard to forget the 14th of February in the year 2018, when I was actually here in the U.S. Senate when news reports began to emerge that there had been a shooting at a school in South Florida, where I live.

I was at the time—or I am still now, but at the time, all four of my kids were in school in South Florida, and as a parent, the first thing that flashes in your mind is, Where? Which schools was it?

Fortunately, we were blessed by God's grace that it was not any of the schools that my children were in, but, sadly, there were other Floridians on that day who were impacted in ways that I think will clearly forever change their lives, but I think it has also impacted the Nation.

It is now well known what happened on that terrible day, a day of complete horror that shocked the Nation, and today, we stop and remember those who lost their lives on that day and those whose bravery saved lives on that day.

We have learned much since that day about the things that went wrong with law enforcement, with the FBI, with local authorities, and with the school district, and that work continues. The monster who committed this act is now facing the justice of the Florida court system and will soon be sentenced.

But I wanted to spend the brief time we have to talk about it here today focusing on what has happened since that day and, in particular, the extraordinary work of some of the parents of those children who lost their lives on that tragic day, because they have turned their pain into activism in ways that have had concrete and meaningful impact.

One in particular is Max Schachter and his family, who, as they dove into this, realized that there was no place where school districts could go and learn about the best practices for how to safeguard a school or any facility, for that matter. Everyone was off doing their own thing, being pitched contracts and ideas by different companies that said: We can add this, and we can give you that. But there didn't seem to be a single place where you could go and learn the best practices to ensure the safety of our students.

That began to change because of his work. He lost a son, Alex, on that day, but from that pain, he has become a national leader on the issue of a Federal clearinghouse, which now exists.

The previous administration, the Trump administration, took executive action on it. Today, there exists a